

Dean Rusk: On the Presidency

These remarks by former Secretary of State Dean Rusk are excerpted from a conversation he held last month with Georgia broadcasters at the University of Georgia's School of Journalism. The conversations were broadcast by WSB in Atlanta; this is the second of two articles derived from the broadcast. Mr. Rusk is now Professor of International Law at the University of Georgia.

I don't anticipate in the next decade or two that we would have anything that could be called a world government operating in any sense like, say, the Federal Government in Washington inside the United States. I do think, however, that a great many things can be done short of that.

I would hope, for example, that both sides could draw back from contentious issues like Berlin and the Middle East, and ask themselves the question: What are these common interests that we might have regardless of our problems and quarrels and ideological differences? And I think if we started from the concept of the family of man, Homo Sapiens, a species living on this planet, that we could find some common interests simply because we're both human beings.

For example, wheat rusts don't select their targets on a basis of politics. Epidemics don't bother about national or ideological frontiers. We both have an interest in weather reporting. We both have an interest in the avoidance of nuclear war. We both have an interest in the protection of the environment.

So I think there are a good many things which we can do jointly in the interest of both sides which may over time lay a restraining hand upon some of these more violent and controversial political issues.

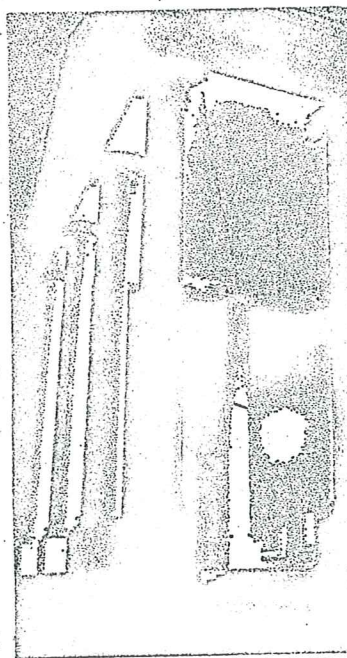
The United Nations is an utterly indispensable organization. One of the problems is that much of its work gets very little attention. General agreement, serenity, a successful negotiation are not news. It takes a little blood and controversy to get public attention. That's a long story and I don't want to get into that, but the truth of the matter is that the overwhelming majority of international frontiers are peaceful. The overwhelming majority of treaties are complied with. The overwhelming majority of disputes are settled by peaceful means.

Now, despite the fact that this does not appear in newspapers and TV news programs, there's an enormous amount of unseen work in international cooperation going on all the time. The United Nations and its specialized agencies play a major role in that

He Assesses Styles Of Truman, Ike, JFK, LBJ and Nixon

day-to-day work of the world. Someday we may find a way to bring that to public attention more effectively.

Back in 1952 when President Eisenhower was elected, a newsman asked Senator John Sherman Cooper whether he thought there would be major changes in American foreign policy when President Eisenhower became President. And he said, no, I don't think so, because in general the foreign policy of the United States de-



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pends upon the kind of people we are and the nature of the world environment in which we live. And those two things don't change very much simply because we elect a new President.

Now it is true that each incoming administration wants to not only to be different but appear to be different than the one which preceded it. And you hear a good deal of talk about that. But nevertheless there are more elements of continuity than elements of change in American foreign policy regardless of which party is in the White House or which party controls the Congress. A thousand cables a day go out of the Department of State on every working day and about 990 of those cables have little to do with who's President.

President Johnson knew that he

was not going to be able to wind up the war in Vietnam before he left office. And so he left President Nixon all of the options open to him. We had a military position in South Vietnam that could not be overrun by North Vietnam. We had the Paris peace talks established as a point of contact between the two sides for any political discussion. And we had already gone pretty far in building up and equipping the South Vietnamese forces.

President Nixon could make his choice since he was assuming the responsibility at the behest of the American people for making those decisions. Now he's elected to make certain decisions, and I think all of us want to wish him well in the outcome.

But in general I would simply say that foreign policy doesn't change a great deal simply with the election of new Presidents even though sometimes . . . Well, let me confess one thing. The Alliance for Progress, for example, really was started by Milton Eisenhower in the closing days of the Eisenhower Administration. President Kennedy took up the idea, gave it a new name, and articulated it brilliantly to the nations of this hemisphere. But the essential idea of the Alliance for Progress was not a new invention. So there are elements of continuity that cut across an Administration.

I've tried to avoid the role of a grandstand quarterback trying to give gratuitous advice to my successors. After all, the American people decided they wanted some other people there and they don't want to hear from me.

Each President will develop his own style of operations. And I think that's entirely appropriate and fitting because it's an awesome and lonely job and each man ought to make himself as comfortable as possible in it. Because there's very little comfort in it.

Presidents Truman, Eisenhower and Johnson tended to rely pretty heavily upon those officers of Government who helped them carry the public and in effect constitutional and statutory responsibilities of office.

President Kennedy was much freer to circulate around among a lot of people who may or may not have carried responsibility and share some responsibility with them in a somewhat informal kind of fashion. Now President Kennedy was an incandescent man. He set us all on fire. He was a great man with whom to work. But he did not have a strong sense of organization in the way in which he conducted his own office. I think the others were much more systematic in the way they approached it. I think, in that regard, Mr. Nixon is somewhat more like President Eisenhower.